

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 187 309

IR 008 349

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 TITLE A Constitution for Danish Libraries.
 PUB DATE 79
 NOTE 22p.; Paper presented at the Conference of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (45th, Copenhagen, Denmark, August 27-September 1, 1979) . Best copy available.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS *Administrative Policy; Foreign Countries; History; *Legislation; *Library Networks; Library Planning; National Libraries; Public Libraries; *Research Libraries
 IDENTIFIERS *Denmark

ABSTRACT This overview of the history of legislation governing the Danish library system from 1920 to the present: describes the various kinds of libraries in Denmark, explores the current controversies surrounding the roles of several supervisory library bodies, and details recent recommendations of the Danish Library Commission. (PM)

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IFLA Council 1979

Plenary Session

56/PLE/3 E

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A Constitution for Danish Libraries

by

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A CONSTITUTION FOR DANISH LIBRARIES

Speech held at the IFLA Congress by O. Perch Nielsen,
Permanent Under-Secretary, Ministry of Cultural Affairs

Introduction

Three and a half years ago the Danish Minister of Cultural Affairs appointed a commission of twenty persons (four women and 16 men) with special interest in library matters to consider a change in the objectives and structure of the Danish library system. This change was to form part of a general reframing of the policy concerning the national information and library services and to ensure the most appropriate use in terms of cultural policy and economy of the resources placed at the disposal of all libraries open to the public.

This commission, termed the Library Commission, in their turn consulted eight Special Committees with a total of 118 members also set up by the Minister of Cultural Affairs. The Special Committees submitted their reports which were then reviewed by the Commission. Now the Commission, with the aid of a secretariat of five persons skilled in library matters, has written its final report. This report is printing and will be submitted to the Minister in a few weeks. A summary of its recommendations has been distributed to the participants of this Conference.

The members of the Commission are unanimous in proposing that the new Act to be passed should in principle cover all types of libraries open to the public and all libraries that are financed or supported by the central government - that is to say, a comprehensive Libraries Act which applies to research and public libraries alike, stressing the unity and totality of, and the connection between, the various types of library - in short, a new constitution for the whole Danish library system.

This is the most essential result of the Commission's work, but before giving you further details of this proposal - and some of the others - I think it would be appropriate at this point to give you some brief information concerning the two elements contained in the words library act, or library legislation, which is precisely the principal issue with which this conference is concerned. However, I shall reverse the order of the two elements and speak of legislation first and then of libraries.

For obvious reasons these reflections are concerned with Danish library conditions only. This is not because our system is in any way better than the systems of other countries or because we think that our system ought to serve as a model of reforms in other countries, but because our system may in all its aspects, good as well as bad ones, be used as a basis for reconsideration.

Legislation

A medieval Danish statute book begins by the words: "With law shall land be built". However, this well-known rule has not been applied to the cultural sphere of this country until rather recently. It is true that we know of rather exhaustive school laws and detailed provisions for ecclesiastical matters from earlier times, and around the change of the century detailed laws were passed on the rights of the creative and performing artists (copyright). Also, when the broadcasting service was established as a government institution, a broadcasting act was passed, and the first Public Libraries Act came into force in 1920. But apart from these scattered examples, cultural life was only sporadically governed by law, and no attempts were made on the part of the authorities to combine artistic or cultural forms of expression of similar nature into uniform groups - let alone to combine them altogether into one single group - with the object of formulating a common goal or organising their activities along the lines of superior social viewpoints.

Only in the last 10 or 20 years have we been speaking of a cultural policy and have made laws for it.

Of course cultural policies have also been pursued in this country in previous times. The term has been coined rather recently, but the meaning has been known for centuries. The great eras in the history of literature and art were the period when the artists were used and supported by influential persons who were often dictated by sheer common sense, but sometimes also because such activities would add to the prestige of the nation, or out of the conviction that art and culture would develop people's character and somehow contribute to keeping society alive and prevent it from becoming stagnant.

The cultural policy pursued in Denmark has the valuable and long-standing tradition that any public financial aid or subsidy must not result in any restrictions of the liberty of the beneficiaries who should be free to decide for themselves how to use the money for the cultural activities they carry on. Here quality is the only thing that counts.

Liberty and quality, then, are the two major principles when we speak of cultural policy. Such a policy is also based on an administratively decentralised system within which the county and local councils can carry out cultural activities in their respective areas and co-operate either among themselves or with the central government in solving the more extensive problems within this field.

In recent years a number of fundamentally important acts based on this principle have been adopted with general political support along the lines outlined above. This has been the case with theatres, film and cinemas, support of creative art, museums, and music. As far as the libraries are concerned, the Danish Public Libraries Act was thoroughly revised in 1964 and the Danish Library School Act in 1966.

This pattern is not yet complete. Unfortunately, we have not yet succeeded in making certain aspects of cultural life fully accessible to the general public, this applies especially to the visual arts and to certain untraditional cultural activities. It is also characteristic that a number of the central government institutions, such as museums, archives, and research libraries, have no legislation for their activities or for their place in the general system.

One may well ask whether legislation is in general an appropriate means of promoting cultural policies. As far as we know, this is a particularly Danish phenomenon. Even Norway and Sweden, to which we are in many respects so closely related, follow different courses.

Legislation has always provided a means of binding together various regions and groups of population into a uniform body. Also, it has often served to underline the importance of a particular field. Where a certain sphere or a particular institution is in the hands of the minister and his administration, these can to a considerable extent be managed through the grants made available for this purpose, but where legislation has been passed in a particular field and objectives and functions have been defined, it is likely that the members of parliament will follow it more closely through getting current information and exerting control. In this way it is possible to provide an improved basis for supervision in terms of comprehensive social considerations.

Legislation may establish and delegate powers and create rights and duties of individuals or institutions. The passing of acts clearly indicates that a number of problems have to be solved - and this usually requires government grants. Without Parliament playing an active role in framing the relevant laws, grants for cultural activities would not have been available to such a wide extent.

Much of what has just been said about legislation can no doubt be regarded both as an advantage and as a drawback. Too specific laws are

often a drawback, and it is therefore not surprising that legislation for cultural activities is generally framed in rather broad outlines, leaving details to ministers, authorities and expert bodies. But this is also not without its problems.

Up to now little research has been done in the law relating to public measures under which the cultural legislation can be said to belong. This may be due to its close dependence on politics and the changing social conditions, but, on the other hand, certain central elements tend to be rather uniform. It is hardly possible to be more precise at the moment as we know so very little about these matters.

The Libraries

The research libraries are the oldest of our libraries. The Copenhagen University Library was founded in 1482, the Royal Library by King Frederik III in 1657. In 1793 the Royal Library became open to the general public and, with its comprehensive collection of books, manuscripts, letters and pictures, it also has the function of being Denmark's national library. Since 1943 these two libraries have been under joint management.

Like these two libraries based in Copenhagen, the State Library at Århus is a non-specialised library which will provide readers with material within all subjects. This library also contains the State Newspaper Collection. Since the 1930's the State Library has had the double function of being the university library for the University of Århus and a national centre for inter-library lending, that is to say that requests for books which cannot be met by a public library are in the first hand passed on to the State Library at Århus.

Under an Act dating from 1927, both the Royal Library and the State Library are entitled to receive free of charge one copy of each new book published in this country.

Odense University Library, established in 1965, is Denmark's third largest research library. It covers all subjects which can be studied at the University of Odense.

Research libraries covering one or more subjects have existed for a long time. The Art Academy Library and the Veterinary and Agricultural Library both date back to the middle of the eighteenth century. In 1942 the Technical Library and the library of the Danish Industrial Society were combined into the Technical Library of Denmark which, in its capacity of central library and documentation centre, serves both the Technical University of Denmark, to which it belongs administratively, and Danish trade and industry in general.

It is not possible to mention all Danish research libraries here. There are approx. 400 of them altogether - differing widely in respect of size, subjects covered, age, status, and internal structure. They are not connected administratively, but a system of national co-ordination of acquisitions was introduced in 1927. This arrangement was the result of detailed commission work more than 50 years ago and is organised in the following way: Certain, specially selected libraries (the so-called principal academic libraries) have undertaken to purchase foreign literature within one or more specified subjects to a wider extent than other libraries. The arrangement has not been officially established and is therefore difficult to administer. It is widely held - even among advocates of such a selective system - that the arrangement needs thorough revision, not least because it does not include any of the university libraries that have been established outside Copenhagen after the introduction of the arrangement.

The three largest research libraries have each their individual budget, and like a few minor research libraries they are under the supervision

of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs which is also the case with the public libraries. The majority of the remaining state research libraries, often connected to an institute of higher education, belong under the Ministry of Education, and the rest (equal to about 5 per cent of the grants) go under some ten other ministries.

The office as National Librarian, established in 1943, under whose administration the Royal and University Libraries are placed, and the establishment of a joint planning and advisory council for all research libraries have ensured implementation of a number of joint activities and a certain measure of standardisation and uniformity. But neither the joint council nor any single ministry have formal powers over all research libraries, and no uniform rules exist as to cataloguing, classification, lending or statistics. There is no central consultants arrangement, and co-operation between main research libraries and institute and laboratory libraries is at present not satisfactory.

Nearly all of the research libraries are government institutions, which means that they have all been hit by the general measures of cuts in spending that have taken place in recent years while in the same period the amount of information has exploded. There are greater demands than previously on the service required by scientists and students. It is understandable that even the librarians have submitted proposals for structural changes, primarily through the establishment of a central supervision. It is very pleasing that the research libraries have taken an active part in the plans for improvement of their present situation.

All major Danish research libraries are traditionally open to the public. There has also been a long tradition for close co-operation between the research and public libraries. This applies not only to book lending but to other activities as well. Since 1954 the Danish Library Bureau has assisted both types of library in solving their bibliographic and library-technical problems; the National Loan Centre is the connecting link between the research and public libraries as far as lending is concerned, and the co-operation between them is undertaken by an advisory

joint committee. Finally, it should be mentioned that the Royal Danish School of Librarianship is a joint institution educating librarians for both types of library.

The public libraries are a child of the Age of Enlightenment and the popular and spiritual revival in the latter part of the previous century. The public libraries were started on local and private initiative, but from 1882 onwards they were subsidised by the state. Later on, an agency was established to advise the libraries, and a turning point for the development of public libraries was reached with the first Public Libraries Act (1920) which provided for the establishment of the State Inspection of Public Libraries as a government institution.

During the following years the number of public libraries increased, one of the reasons being the favourable conditions for obtaining government grants, but progress was slow. As late as in the mid-thirties nearly half of the country's local districts had no library. The libraries primarily increased in the provincial towns, and here they were usually local council institutions. Apart from the State Inspection of Public Libraries, which assisted and supervised the public libraries on a national level and computed their grants, there were a number of regional central libraries which provided assistance to the local libraries in the field of selection of books, library-technical questions and supplementary lending of books not in stock at the local libraries. The Danish Library Association was the all-embracing association which published a magazine for Danish libraries and arranged annual gatherings for persons with an interest in library matters.

It was of immense importance to the public libraries when as from 1937/38 2½ per cent of the annual government grants to public libraries was retained for joint library activities. Among other things, these funds contributed to the establishment of a joint cataloguing and bibliography service for public libraries.

Later on, legislation on public libraries has continued along these lines. Over the last 15 years each local council has been required to establish a public library within its district, with departments both for adults and children. In local districts with more than 5,000 inhabitants the head of the library must be a qualified librarian employed on a full-time basis. Apart from books, the public libraries also provide gramophone records, tape cassettes, slides, art reproductions, and posters. This service must be free of charge and open to all residents of this country. Several public libraries also carry on extensive cultural activities in arranging film shows, concerts, art exhibitions, meetings and young persons' theatre, and thus they may well be characterised as local culture centres. In the words of the Act, the object of the public libraries is to "promote information, education and cultural activity".

Denmark has 273 local districts. In 14 of these the local library functions both as the ordinary public library for the local district and as central library on behalf of all public libraries within that county. Their total stock is 16.5 million volumes for adults and 8.7 million volumes for children; to this should be added 1.1 million gramophone records and tapes (available in 172 libraries). The annual lending amounts to 37.5 million volumes for adults, 28.5 million for children, and 4.5 million records. The total staff employed in public libraries is 4,900, 1,700 of whom are qualified librarians. 48 per cent of all Danish adults use the public libraries, and for children the figures are 76 per cent of the 7-11 year-olds and 84 per cent of the 12-15 year-olds.

The public (and central) libraries are local authority institutions. The state provides guidance and supervision and pays 20 per cent of the total operating costs. This grant has served as an encouragement for the local councils, but in recent years the central government has been contemplating discontinuing this arrangement. The political uncertainty concerning this question has probably contributed to the appointment of the Library Commission.

The public libraries are marked by a certain measure of uniformity, they have the same objectives, the same technical structure, and a more or less uniform stock, however varying in size. Their operations are standardised, and the rules laid down for the co-operation between them are rather fixed.

An account of the Danish library system would not be complete if one did not mention the libraries with the special objective of serving scientists, students and pupils attending various schools and courses.

The Danish education system is based on a nine-year primary school attended by 95 per cent of the population. The local authorities are not required to provide a library at each of these schools, but the (Public) Libraries Act provides for attainment of this goal before 1st April 1969. There are now 1875 school libraries with a total stock of 14 million volumes. Today there is wide agreement that school libraries are a necessary and valuable part of education.

The primary school is the only type of school for which there are provisions in the law for the establishment of libraries. There are libraries at certain other types of school, but their need of library material required in the teaching has generally not been met satisfactorily. This applies to grammar schools, general vocational schools, commercial schools, technical schools, teachers' training colleges, vocational schools for semi-skilled and skilled workers, the so-called 'free schools', the continuation schools, the folk high schools, and the general adult evening class education.

The case is different for scientists and students attending universities and institutes of higher education. One would think that their needs had been catered for by the university libraries and the libraries of the institutes of higher education. This is also the case in some places, primarily at the minor institutes and especially if they have modern and well-planned premises. But this is not so everywhere.

The oldest university libraries started as collections of books for students and with the purpose of serving the so-called free studies which were based on lectures and the writing of papers. Already in the middle of the previous century, however, other types of education had been established which required special rooms with a reference library where students could work guided by their tutors.

Modelled on German conditions laboratories were now arranged in which books replaced flasks and tubes. Later on, the institute became the principal unit of the university structure, but an institute required assistants, classrooms, rooms for the scientists, and a library. Nowadays nearly all subjects read at a university have their own institute and a library connected to it, and today there are more than 400 institute and laboratory libraries in total.

At first the institutes acquired reference books, anthologies and central monographs, but several of the book collections have now been increased far beyond these limits. In certain cases the laboratory libraries have been made into institute libraries or are shared by two or more institutes, and, in other cases, besides acquiring their own books the institutes have inherited or received considerable book collections as donations, which has made some of these libraries the best stocked special book collections in Denmark on a particular subject.

Universities and institutes of higher education have been able to decide in their internal councils whether they wanted to establish new institutes and the libraries attached to them. The main research libraries have had to make special arrangements with the institute libraries in each case where they wanted to co-operate on purchases and cataloguing. The arrangements vary, and so does their effectiveness. Thus, in the case of the University of Copenhagen, the institutes purchase their own books which does not provide any guarantee against unnecessary double acquisitions or ensure that the funds available are used in the most appropriate way. Moreover, several of the institute libraries, among

them rather large ones, do not take part in any co-operation with their main research library.

With the purpose of facilitating library use for students, the part of Copenhagen University which has recently moved into new (provisional) premises in Amager last year had a special library branch added to serve this extension. It is a central library belonging under the University Library containing the essential subject-related literature in more than one copy for lending, and, in addition, interdisciplinary literature, bibliography reference books and magazines. Also, there is a large number of reading desks, and the students are entitled to extensive service and to be guided in how to find the books they require, etc. The branch is the first of a comprehensive plan for branches with a limited range of subjects, but other branches may not be established for a long time yet, and, on the whole, the uncertainty attached to the enlargement of the University of Copenhagen seriously impedes long-term planning of the future conditions of the University Library and the Royal Library.

The Commission

The description by the Minister of the objectives of the Commission contained a number of central words, such as Target, Structure, Supervision, the Relationship between the Central Administration and the Public and Research Libraries, Co-operation, and Joint Institutions. In short, the Danish library system was to be considered as a comprehensive unit.

The Commission's recommendation for a joint Libraries Act for the research and public libraries is based on the wish for having one comprehensive library system. The members of the Commission are agreed on the need for a central governing body for the research libraries which is able to carry out effective co-ordination, standardisation and rationalisation of the research libraries and other documentation centres, and.

which can also take initiatives for, and control, the development of new forms of dissemination of information. But there is no agreement as to the kind of relationship between such a new governing body for the research libraries and the existing State Inspection of Public Libraries which no one has any intention of dismantling. The majority think that in terms of the present library policy there would be considerable advantages - practical as well as technical ones - in combining the two supervisory library bodies into one directorate for the total library system. Such a joint directorate would have to include one section dealing with functions common to both sectors, plus a section for the public libraries and one for the research libraries, which would also reflect the objects clause of the Libraries Act. Further, a joint advisory staff should be available. According to the majority, one consultative body, and one only, namely the Library Council, should be associated to this directorate and express its opinion in all matters of principle and of major importance to libraries. The council should consist of 25 members and should organise its own procedure and business the way it thinks fit.

As a consequence of this, the majority propose that all university libraries and the most important academic libraries, insofar as this has not already been done, are removed so as to become the responsibility of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. In this way the joint directorate will comprise these libraries, together with the public libraries and the three major research libraries which are already in their proper place.

A minority do not agree to the idea of having a directorate jointly with the public libraries but is in other respects extremely positive towards public libraries. This minority primarily view the research libraries as implements of the higher education and research and development work. The superior planning and the determination of the order of priority regarding the grants for various activities of the research libraries should, in the opinion of the minority, form an integral part of the total planning of research, and the governing body for the research

libraries should therefore be established under the Ministry of Education with the consequence that the three individual research libraries at present under the Ministry of Cultural Affairs should be removed to the Ministry of Education.

The minority also want an independent research library council with 21 members and a special joint committee of Danish research libraries composed of representatives from all research libraries plus eight staff representatives. Further, they recommend that a permanent liaison committee be set up for co-operation with the public library council.

Yet another dissenting group is trying to straddle these two extreme views in that they agree with the previous minority on a large number of issues: an independent supervisory body for the research libraries, a particular research library council, a joint committee for all research libraries, maintenance of the State Library Inspection which should be provided with a public libraries council, and establishment of formalised co-operation between the governing bodies and councils in the two fields concerning all joint activities - but this second minority wish to place all these bodies and councils under the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, however without moving any of the research libraries away from the ministry they belong under at present. Whether a joint directorate should be established for the management of both library sectors should, in the opinion of this minority, not be decided until a much later time.

The Commission has had detailed discussions on three other questions of common interest: The national bibliography, the government funds placed at the disposal of the public libraries, and the principle of providing library services free of charge.

The Commission is of the opinion that maintaining a Danish national bibliography is an important national task which should as soon as possible be extended to include all audio-visual material too. The Commission recommends that the Ministry of Cultural Affairs sets up a

national bibliography council with the objective of preparing and publishing a total national bibliography. In this connection the duty to deliver all printed matter should be extended so as to comprise all material included under the international rules.

The funds placed at the disposal of the public libraries have been mentioned at an earlier stage. As is very often the case with funds at free disposal these funds have unfortunately tended to become mere fixed annual grants, but the Commission advocates the view that the permanent activities supported by these funds should now be separated from the total funds available and that these activities should instead be maintained by direct grants either from the central government or from the local councils.

However, a sum at free disposal is still necessary both for the joint activities within each of the sectors, public libraries and research libraries, and also for the joint activities of both types of library together. The majority of the Commission recommend a joint sum at free disposal amounting to one per cent of the government grants provided for the operation of public libraries plus one per cent of the government's expenditure for research libraries belonging under the joint directorate. In fiscal 1979 the total sum at the disposal of the library system would accordingly become approx. DKr.11 million. - The minority do not want a joint sum but would prefer funds amounting to one per cent of the total grants by the research libraries for their governing body. How this amount should be appropriated should appear from the notes accompanying the government's annual Budget.

It has been a long-standing principle in the Danish library system that borrowers are not charged for using books and other library material. As far as the public libraries are concerned, this principle is expressly provided for in the law. None of the members of the Commission wish to depart from this rule. but the fact that in other countries fees are charged for certain services based on searches by data processing has

resulted in a division of opinion into three groups within the Commission. One group (9 members) want to maintain the present principle of providing library services free of charge and are totally uncompromising in this view. The members of this group think that it is the duty of society to provide the necessary grants, and once they have been spent it is the end of data-processed searches in that year.

Another group (consisting of one member) agrees in the general idea of this view but thinks that the libraries should be entitled to charge payment for the so-called SDI services (dissemination of information) - which is current indexation and bibliographing of certain subjects.

A third group (another 9 members) think that the present service level of the libraries cannot be maintained if the libraries cannot collect the specific costs incurred from outside. Library service should be free of charge as far as this is possible, and this applies particularly to all cases where the library thinks that a search should be conducted by data processing, or in cases where the information cannot be found in any other way, but apart from providing such services the libraries should not be expected to defray the expenses imposed on them externally. Students and scientists must get the necessary funds from their own college or institution, and trade and industry must regard such expenses as a cost. This group recommend that detailed rules in this field should be drawn up by the library directorate.

Some of you will remember that the Commission consisted of 20 members and may therefore wonder why only 19 members take a stand on the principle whether to charge fees or not. This is due to the fact that one member was appointed Minister of Education and as such had to resign from the Commission.

I would like to mention another problem which has given rise to heated discussions among the members of the Commission and among the public. The Public Libraries Act provides that no book should be banned from the shelves of libraries on account of its views. All views must be given a

fair chance, even the most controversial ones, regardless of whether they fit into the views of the local librarian or the political party in power at present, or the views of the majority of the readers, for that matter. When selecting books, quality should be the only criterion. But who is to decide what is quality?

Generally the borderlines of quality have been drawn quite liberally and have been based on the principle that libraries are there to serve the public. It is the general impression that the libraries have no wish to act as guardians, and this was also so in a North Jutland town where the librarians in November 1977 decided at a book selection meeting to acquire the book entitled "Sabotage". The book was written by a young Danish writer whose books had also previously attracted attention, some people finding his books downright provocative. In December 1977 the local authority culture committee decided that the book should not be purchased for their public library.

The Federation of Librarians instituted legal proceedings and claimed that the decision of the culture committee be declared void. The three judges however gave judgment in favour of the culture committee.

The judgment will probably give rise to renewed discussions when the next Libraries Bill is presented to the Danish parliament. The majority of the Commission find that as long as the local council is entitled to frame policies for the library's selection of material this also entitles the committee to intervene against individual acquisitions (or books not purchased), but the majority at the same time recommend that committees set up by the local councils should not interfere and leave it to the librarians to select the books they want to purchase. A minority group want provisions in the next Act to the effect that the local councils cannot alter the decisions made by the librarians on the selection of books.

Besides recommending the creation of a central governing body for the research libraries, the majority advocate that the present selective

system involving the academic libraries is revised and that all institutions of higher education should establish their own library committees. Such committees should have access to the budgets and accounts of the institute libraries and should lay down guidelines for how to distribute the selection of literature between main research libraries and institute libraries. They should also ensure local standardisation and uniformity.

The Commission recommend that the data processing and development work in progress should be maintained, that a remote book storage for research libraries should be established, and they also recommend substantial increases in the grants for the operation of research libraries.

The Commission propose no fundamental changes in the situation of the public libraries. They want to maintain the status of public libraries as institutions governed by the local councils, however with support provided by the central government and supervision by a government institution, and they also want to preserve the present structure of each local district having its own library system with a central library for each county. The proposals of the Commission for public libraries therefore express strengthening, improvement and expansion, but contain no new ventures for reorganisation or any new formulation of objectives - which was to be expected.

Some principal points deserve special mention, because they are concerned with essential and, in some instances, also expensive proposals.

Not later than two years after the new Act has come into force each public library should be headed by a qualified full-time librarian.

The majority of the Commission wish to maintain the system of government grants for local council library costs for yet another transition period which they recommend should be 5 years as from the coming into force of the Act. A minority think that the system of grants has lost its import-

ance and find that the local councils must now take over the full financial responsibility for the public libraries.

The Commission is agreed that after a transition period of 3 years the public libraries should be required to place gramophone records and music tapes at the disposal of the public for use in the library and for taking home. After a further three-year transitional period these records and tapes should be included in the free borrowing right - which means that they should not be restricted for the residents of the local district alone - and in inter-library lending. But already during the first three-year period the central libraries must have obtained the material for relending through local libraries.

In line with what is already in operation in the social and education sectors, the Commission recommend that the public libraries should be required to submit annual plans for expansion in co-operation with the central library. The county council, also assisted by the central library, should draw up a general plan for the county and submit it to the Library Inspection. Such plans should especially be concerned with questions of structure and service, and further details should be considered by a committee and then be finally determined by the Minister of Cultural Affairs.

The role of the central libraries should be strengthened. The most important activity of the central libraries should be their advisory and co-ordinating services towards the individual public libraries of the county, towards other libraries in that district and similar institutions, and towards the county council and the Library Bureau.

Furthermore, the Commission recommend increased efforts in the library service of the blind and people with other reading handicaps, and it also stresses the need for an improvement in meeting the library needs of guest workers. Also the outreach library services and the information activities of public libraries should be strengthened.

Finally, the Commission are unanimously agreed that the Act should contain express provisions for public institutes of learning whose library needs have not been met satisfactorily to establish their own libraries and to purchase the library material needed for their daily activities. This duty also applies to the employment of qualified personnel and may in some cases be fulfilled by making agreements with existing public libraries.

The public libraries should also be required to meet the basic library needs in connection with the general adult evening-class education.

Conclusion

The large number of proposals cannot be realised without increased government grants. Some people think that enough money has already been spent on libraries and, in keeping with this, the work of the Commission has been criticised even before it is completed.

The proposals have indeed been submitted at a politically very unfortunate time, but we have to face the problems now - the present Libraries Act is coming up for revision by the Danish parliament this autumn.

One must also admit that the Commission has - perhaps to a wider extent than was expected at the outset - wished to frame the ideal library policy as far as this is possible in the present circumstances. The Commission has not expressed whether its recommendations for a total expansion of the Danish library system should be implemented at once or over a number of years, nor do they indicate any order of priority.

This is left to the politicians, as all the experts in the world can never render politicians superfluous. Experts are and must necessarily be professionally single-minded whereas the responsible politicians must take all things into consideration.

But one thing is certain, we cannot resign ourselves to the fact that what we have obtained so far is enough.